
INDIANA SUPREME COURT GUIDELINES FOR COURT INTEPRETERS & CANDIDATES

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The Indiana Supreme Court Interpreter Certification Program is not a training program. Individuals seeking certification should already have training and experience in interpretation. Before seeking certification, candidates should review the [National Center for State Courts' self-assessment guide](#). If a language is not on the [list of available oral examinations](#) from the National Center for State Courts, a candidate is likely eligible to become a Qualified Interpreter rather than a Certified Interpreter.

Certification Steps

The Indiana Supreme Court Interpreter Certification Program must be completed in its entirety (except for candidates who are granted [reciprocity](#) or seeking certification in [American Sign Language](#)) within two years for an interpreter to be deemed certified or qualified. A candidate is not eligible to participate in the Indiana Supreme Court Interpreter Certification Program if the candidate has been disciplined by the Indiana Supreme Court or any of its programs or agencies or by any other state's Supreme Court or any of its programs or agencies. Conviction for any felony or for a misdemeanor involving dishonesty or false statement shall disqualify a candidate from certification if the conviction is ten years old or less.

1. [Register and be accepted to the program](#)
2. Complete the online English written exam prep course
3. Attend the two-day orientation covering interpreter ethics, protocol, basic criminal procedure, and the three modes of interpretation used in the courtroom or complete the *online orientation course**
4. Pass a [written exam](#) covering vocabulary, criminal procedure, and court interpreter ethics with a score of 80% or better
5. Attend the two-day skills building seminar covering sight translation, consecutive interpretation and simultaneous interpretation or complete the *online skills building and oral exam prep course**
6. Attend the one-day simultaneous workshop or complete the *online skills building and oral exam prep course**
7. Pass all three sections of the [National Center for State Courts' approved interpreter certification oral exam](#) with a score of 70% or better: sight translation, consecutive interpretation and simultaneous interpretation, scoring no lower than 65% on either of the two sight translation portions

8. For [certification-eligible languages](#) that have an abbreviated oral exam, pass an [English proficiency test](#)
9. Submit to a criminal background check
10. Sign a disclosure of contact information providing a valid phone number and email address to be listed on the [Certified Interpreter Registry](#)
11. Sign an oath promising to comply with the Indiana Supreme Court [Interpreter Code of Conduct and Procedure](#)

** Except for the online English written exam prep, all online courses are still under development.*

Becoming a Qualified Interpreter

If a language is not on the [list of certification-eligible languages](#), then there is no oral exam for a candidate to take. Instead, a candidate can become a qualified interpreter by following the same steps above except #7 and #8. Instead of the oral exam, a candidate must score Superior or the highest level in the [oral proficiency interview](#).

If seeking qualification in American Sign Language, the last training event is skills building. The American Sign Language interpreter must submit RID certification at this event.

Written Exam

Contains 135 multiple-choice questions and measures a candidate's knowledge of the following areas central to the work of a court interpreter:

English language: Interpreters must have a high degree of proficiency in the English language and familiarity with a range of language constructions. Comprehension of written English vocabulary and common English idioms will be tested.

Court-related terms and usage: Interpreters must be familiar with the terminology and procedures of the court system. Recognition of common court-related situations and vocabulary will be tested.

Ethics and professional conduct: Interpreters must have general knowledge of ethical standards guiding the performance of duties. Questions will be aimed at measuring knowledge of ethical behavior and professional conduct.

[More information about the written exam](#)

Oral Exam

Tests proficiency in the three modes of interpretation used in the courts:

- sight translation
- consecutive interpretation
- simultaneous interpretation

A candidate must achieve a score of 70% or better on each section of the test to pass, scoring no lower than 65% on either of the two sight translation portions. Tests are given individually, tape recorded, and scored by two federally certified interpreters who are trained as raters.

[More information about the oral exam](#)

[Common oral interpreting exam performance deficiencies](#)

Candidates do not need to pass all three portions of the oral exam in one sitting and may retake the sections they did not pass when the next oral exam is offered. Failure to pass within two years of enrolling in the program will result in having to restart the program.

Borrowing Practice Materials

Candidates admitted to the program who are seeking certification are permitted to borrow training materials from the Indiana Office of Court Services to prepare for the oral exam if attending in-person training events. These materials are distributed during skills building and must be returned the week of the next session of oral exams. Candidates will be charged \$80 for lost or damaged materials. If materials are not returned at the appropriate time without explanation, the Indiana Office of Court Services will assume that the materials are lost.

English Proficiency Test

If a language has an abbreviated [National Center for State Courts' oral exam](#), a candidate must take the English proficiency test. This test will be administered along with the abbreviated oral exam. The English proficiency test is a **Listening and Speaking Test** administered via telephone and consists of 22 questions requiring the candidate to respond in English. This test takes approximately 15-20 minutes.

Oral Proficiency Interview

The oral proficiency interview may consist of a **Legal Interpretation Test** and **English Listening and Speaking Test** or **Listening and Speaking Test** in both English and the target language.

- The **Legal Interpretation Test** is administered via telephone and consists of a pre-scripted dialogue. The candidate interprets after each segment of dialogue.
- The **Listening and Speaking Test** is administered via telephone and consists of 22 questions requiring the candidate to respond in the same language. This test takes approximately 15-20 minutes.

A candidate must score Superior or the highest level in the oral proficiency interview to pass. Failure to pass within two years of enrolling in the program will result in having to restart the program.

Exam Cancellations

A candidate who wishes to cancel a scheduled oral exam, oral proficiency interview, or English proficiency test should contact Court Interpreter Program staff at interpreter@courts.in.gov at least one week prior to the exam date to avoid paying administrative fees.

Oral Exam Re-Grades

Oral exams are graded by two certified raters who are certified through the National Center for State Courts. Every effort is made to grade exams accurately and thoroughly. Failing scores that are close to passing (within a few points) are double-checked by raters. Accordingly, re-grading of exams is discouraged. From time to time, candidates seek an oral exam re-grade. Please be advised that an interpreter candidate may seek a re-grade of an oral exam within 90 days of receiving the results only if the candidate passed two of the three sections of the test and has come within 5 points of a passing score on the remaining section. The interpreter candidate will be required to pay all expenses associated with the re-grade.

Registration Fees

Current registration fees can be found on the [registration page](#). No candidate will be admitted to an event without first receiving payment. Payment in the form of a check or money order must be postmarked by the registration deadline for each event, with the exception on the online English written exam prep course, and sent with tracking to:

Indiana Supreme Court – Office of Judicial Administration
Court Interpreter Certification Program
Attn: Fiscal Department
251 N. Illinois St., Suite 1600
Indianapolis, IN 46204

A \$25 late fee will be assessed for all returned checks.

Reciprocity

Persons possessing out-of-state court interpreter certification may [apply for state reciprocity by submitting a Request for Reciprocity Form](#) with the Indiana Supreme Court Indiana Office of Court Services. The following conditions must be met.

1. Reciprocity is available to out-of-state certified interpreters with Federal Certification or State Certification from National Center for State Courts Interpreter Consortium member states.
2. Reciprocity will be considered and may be granted on a case-by-case basis.
3. The applicant must file a Request for Reciprocity.
4. The out-of-state certification is current in the issuing state or federal program at the time of the Request for Reciprocity.
5. The out-of-state certificate is not a temporary, alternative, or conditional certification.
6. The applicant successfully passes a criminal history check with the Indiana State Police.
7. The applicant takes a sworn oath to uphold the Indiana Court Interpreter Code of Ethics.

National Center for State Courts' Criteria for Reciprocity on the Oral Examination Score

1. Completed the entire test within one testing cycle
2. Scored at least 70% on all three sections, scoring no lower than 65% of either of the two sight translation portions
3. Completed the entire test within one state
4. Did not take the same version of the exam more than two times
5. Did not take the same version of a test form more than once in a period of ten months

Updating Contact Information

Candidates and certified court interpreters should notify the Indiana Office of Court Services if there is a change in name, address, email, ability to travel to provide court interpreting services, or willingness to provide phone and video remote interpreting within 30 days by emailing interpreter@courts.in.gov. This will ensure that the candidate or interpreter continues to receive important updates and that current contact information is listed on the [Certified Interpreter Registry](#). Failure to provide a valid phone number and email will result in immediate removal from the Registry.

Getting Work after Certification

Please be aware that certification does not constitute a guarantee of employment. Currently, some Indiana courts employ independent contractors for court interpretation while other Indiana courts utilize the services of staff court interpreters or agency interpreters. Therefore, the possible income for a court interpreter can vary.

Factors affecting the availability of work for independent contractors include the volume of cases requiring interpretation in a specific language, the employment policies of the applicable court, and the availability of certified interpreters in each locality. [Contact the local courthouse](#) to find out how interpreters are hired in each county.

Resources

- [National Center for State Courts](#)
- [Federal Court Interpreter Certification Exam](#)
- [National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators](#)
- [American Translators Association](#)
- [Midwest Association of Translators & Interpreters](#)
- [Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf](#)

For questions about these administrative policies or the program, please contact Court Interpreter Program staff at interpreter@courts.in.gov.